

Max Eastman-- Renegade!

by William Z. Foster

THE REACTIONARY (and pro-fascist press of the country is now hailing with delight another book by their political crony, the renegade Max Eastman. The book entitled, "Reflections on the Failure of Socialism," is just one more on the long list of bourgeois writings to prove that Socialism won't work.



Mustering all the sinister red-baiting arguments of this period, Eastman's book is a full-scale contribution to the pro-fascist, pro-war camp.

Eastman's thesis, the routine, stale stuff of all renegades, is that he, a great lover of liberty and profound student of Marx, has learned from deep experience and study that the whole project of Socialism is an unworkable and reactionary dream. He leaves the clear implication that the USSR and People's China, the crystallization of the hated world Communism, must be destroyed. This explains the enthusiasm with which his book is being received in warmongering circles.

With the arrogance which once earned him the title of "gangster of the pen," Eastman pictures his path of renegacy, from the formal acceptance of Marxism to an enthusiastic embracing of capitalist "free enterprise," as a wonderful intellectual voyage in which, at long last, he has discovered why Marxism cannot free the working class and must of necessity be reactionary and a failure.

Actually, all Eastman has done has been to absorb the bourgeois economic and political illiterates as reactionary National Commanders of the American Legion, retired Admirals and Generals, and also by Presidents of the United States Chambers of Commerce. It's as simple as that.

WHAT HAPPENED to Eastman is this: Many years ago he developed a romantic diletante yen for Socialism. But when he went to Soviet Russia and came squarely up against the stern realities of the Revolution, he simply collapsed and lost all his enthusiasm. He could not face up to the bitter civil war, the terrible struggle to reconstruct the industries, and the many other severe disciplines made necessary for the Russian people by the overwhelming problems provoked by the capitalist encirclement, and by the imperative need for Soviet Russia to fight desperately for survival.

Eastman, horrified and repelled, thereupon recovered swiftly from his temporary infatuation with Socialism, turned tail upon the Revolution, and in his own devious way, scur-

ried back to the capitalism which offered him an easy life as a pliant intellectual.

It is characteristic of renegades from Communism that, in their treason to the working class, they flee all the way back to the most reactionary circles and practices of capitalism. And like all Judases, they sell what they can of their knowledge to the enemy.

Some become stoolpigeons and perjure themselves on the witness stand, while others, the more cunning, write profitable books to "prove" that Socialism will not work, or that the Soviet Government is threatening the world with war. Mr. Eastman chooses the latter route to cash in on by "explaining" how Marxism is an historical illusion.

This should net him a large sum from his capitalist admirers, even more than Budenz got for swearing guiltless men and women into jail. Never were traitors to Socialism better paid than today, although Matusow has thrown the market into disarray. As an advocate of capitalism now, and one who moves in select McCarthyite circles, Eastman will consider his job of renegacy well done if it pays off handsomely.

THE RENEGADES takes various paths and often use the most complicated rationalizations to try to cover up or justify their treason. Eastman long ago chose the road of Trotzkyism. He began by attacking the first Socialist Republic from the "left." As Stalin pointed out, the essence of Trotzkyism is that it leads back to capitalism, and Eastman, with his boosting of free enterprise and his warmongering, is a classical example of the correctness of Stalin's Marxist analysis of Trotzkyism. Eastmanism is Trotzkyism in the last stages of putrefaction.

The capitalists will, no doubt, peddle a lot of Mr. Eastman's books for him, in the hope that perhaps they will serve to confuse and disorganize numerous working class elements. But they, themselves, will not be silly enough to believe Eastman's absurd thesis. For they know to the marrow of their bones that Socialism does put an end finally to capitalist ownership and exploitation. They are more than convinced, too, contrary to Mr. Eastman's notions, that planned economy works and that Socialism is definitely a going concern.

Especially will they not be deceived by Eastman's "refutation" of Marx and Lenin, not to mention Stalin, when they look around the world, see their own rotting capitalist system everywhere, and observe, terrified, the swift growth of the socialist system which now embraces one-third of the world's population.